

SONGS,
Sketch of the Life,

TESTIMONIALS

FROM THE

MOST EMINENT

COMPOSERS,



AND OPINIONS

OF THE

AMERICAN & ENGLISH

PRESS,

OF

B L I N D T O M

THE MARVELOUS MUSICAL PRODIGY,

THE NEGRO BOY PIANIST

WHOSE RECENT PERFORMANCES AT THE

Great St. James' and Egyptian Halls, London, and Salle Hertz, Paris,

HAVE CREATED SUCH A PROFOUND SENSATION.

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ANECDOTES, SONGS, SKETCHES OF THE LIFE,

TESTIMONIALS OF MUSICIANS AND SAVANS,

AND

OPINIONS OF THE AMERICAN AND ENGLISH PRESS,

OF

“BLIND TOM.”



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BLIND TOM:

THE GREAT NEGRO PIANIST.

THE performances and the character of the child generally attract so little attention, or the remembrance of them is so obscured by the lapse of time before the achievements of the man have made them subjects of interest, that it is always difficult, and often impossible, to gratify the curiosity naturally felt, to know the traits, qualities, and actions, which people imagine must have stamped the child as remarkable, as in the man they have been developed into powers which have lifted him to fame. Such, however, has not been the case with the subject of this sketch. His peculiarities were so singular, and some of them apparently so incompatible with others, as to attract attention in his early infancy; his powers so wonderful, even in their first manifestations, as to astonish and bewilder all who witnessed them. Those who did not witness, did not believe; or rather they could not conceive; for after making all due allowance for what they conceived the marvelous in narration, their powers of conception, of what was possible to such a being, fell far short of the truth; and it may be safely asserted that, to this day, no matter what they may have read or heard, or what they may have been led to expect, none have heard him for the first time, without a feeling of astonishment, and an involuntary acknowledgment to themselves that the reality had exceeded the expectations they had formed, and that "the half had not been told them."

Speculations have been made and theories formed without number, as to the source and the nature of these wonderful powers; it forms no part of the purpose of the writer to speculate or theorize; it is proposed to furnish facts and leave others to form their own theories and make their own speculations.

Thomas Greene Bethune (his parents having taken for him and themselves the name of their former owner), better known to the public as "Blind Tom," was born within a few miles of the city of Columbus, in the county of Muscogee and State of Georgia, on the 25th day of May, 1849. His parents are common field hands of the pure negro blood, with nothing to distinguish them from the

mass of their race, except that his mother—a small woman of fine form—has remarkably small feet and hands, is of an active, merry temperament, and quick in her movements.

Tom was born blind, and, learning nothing from sight, manifested in his early infancy so entire a want of intellect as to induce the belief that he was idiotic as well as blind. His imbecility and helplessness secured for him the sympathy and care of the family in his infancy; when he began to walk and run about the yard, his amusing peculiarities made him a pet. His first manifestation of interest in anything was his fondness for sounds; the first indication of capacity, his power of imitating them. Musical sounds exerted a controlling influence over him; but all sounds, from the soft breathings of the flute to the harsh grating of the corn-sheller, appeared to afford him exquisite enjoyment.

He talked earlier than other children; and he talked no "baby talk." He uttered his words clearly and distinctly, attaching no meaning to them, but seeming to consider them merely sounds, which he imitated, as he did all others that he heard. Whatever words were addressed to him, whether in the form of a question, a command, a request, or as matter of information, he simply repeated in the tones in which they had been uttered; and would repeat not only them, but conversations he had heard—sometimes for hours at a time; yet, long after he was in possession of a vocabulary, with which, if he had known its use, he might have sustained a respectable conversation upon any ordinary topic, he never attempted to express by words an idea, a feeling, or a want. His wants he expressed by a whine, which those about him had to interpret as best they could.

The first effort to teach him was made one evening when the family was at supper, (Tom, as usual at meal times, being present,) when his owner, upon being informed that his mother, as an excuse for not teaching him something, had said he had not sense enough to learn anything, replied, "That is a mistake. A horse or a dog may be taught almost anything, provided you always use precisely the same terms to express the same idea. Show him what you mean, and have the patience to repeat it often enough. Tom has as much sense as a horse or a dog, and I will show you that he can be taught." He thereupon arose from the table, and approaching Tom, said to him, "Tom, sit down." Tom, of course, as was expected, stood still and repeated the words. He repeated the order and sat him down upon the floor. He then said to him, "Tom, get up." Tom sat still and repeated the order. He then repeated the order and lifted Tom to his feet. He then ordered Tom to sit down, which he did promptly—to get up, and he sprang to his feet. From that time there was matter of new interest about Tom. Everybody began to teach him something. It was soon discovered that he forgot nothing. Present to him any number of objects, one after another, tell him the name of each as you presented it, he would put his hand upon it, smell of it, and pronounce its name; then present them in any order you pleased, and, after feeling and smelling of each as it was presented, he would, without fail, give its appropriate name. It was astonishing and interest-

ing to test and to witness the exercise of this power, and, in consequence, Tom speedily learned to distinguish many things and call them by name.

He was perfectly delighted by cries of pain. When his mother whipped any of the older children he would laugh and caper, and rub his hands in an ecstasy of enjoyment, and soon would be found whipping himself, and repeating the words of the mother and the cries of the child. He enjoyed so highly the crying of children that he would inflict pain upon them, for the pleasure of hearing them cry; and a constant watch had to be kept on him when he was about younger children. He once choked a younger brother nearly to death, and at another time burnt an infant sister so badly as to produce fears of a fatal result. To this day any exclamation or expression indicative of pain gives him great pleasure; and though he will express sympathy for the sufferer, and prescribe remedies for his relief, he cannot restrain his expressions of pleasure. Doubtless it is the strength and the intensity of expression given to sounds produced by pain, that afford the enjoyment.

His mother usually did the churning; and when she was engaged in that employment, when he was unable to reach the top of the churn of ordinary size, he would whine and tug at her, until she would stand him on a stool and permit him to go to work. He did all the churning for the family as long as he remained at home, and was perhaps the only person who ever sought it as a source of pleasure.

Unlike other children, he delighted in being out of doors and alone at night, and unless prevented by being shut up in the house, would go into the yard, where he would go around a circle in a sort of dance, accompanying his motion sometimes with a monotonous hum, sometimes repeating conversations he had heard; then he would stop and whirl round like a top, rubbing his hands together, convulsed with laughter, as if he had found something which irresistibly moved him to mirth. This propensity to be out of doors was indulged by his parents the more readily, because, if they kept him in the house, he resorted to all the means in his power to make a noise. He dragged the chairs over the floor, rattled the dishes, beat the tin pans, and, unless closely watched, pinched or bit the younger children to make them cry. If they put him to bed they secured but little relief, for he would roll and twist himself into all sorts of shapes, and laugh and talk for hours, and frequently, unless the door was securely fastened, would get up after everybody else was asleep, and go out to amuse himself in the yard.

His power of judging of the lapse of time was as remarkable as his power of remembering and imitating sounds. Those who are familiar with clocks which strike the hours, have observed that, a few minutes before the clock strikes, there is a sharp sound, different from and louder than the regular ticking. There was a clock in the house; and every hour in the day, just precisely when that sound was produced, Tom was certain to be there, and remain until the hour was struck. At one time the striking machinery got out of order, but

every hour, just at the time, he was there to listen; and as soon as the time for the clock to strike had passed, he would set up a cry and leave.

He exhibited his wonderful musical powers before he was two years old. When the young misses of the family sat on the steps, of an evening, and sang, Tom would come around and sing with them. One of them one evening said to her father :

“ Pa, Tom sings beautifully, and he don't have to learn any tunes; he knows them all; for as soon as we begin to sing, he sings right along with us.”

Very soon she said :

“ He sings fine seconds to anything we sing.”

His voice was then strong, soft, and melodious. Just before he had completed his second year, he had the whooping-cough, from the effects of which his voice underwent an entire change: it became and continued for years exceedingly rough and harsh, though it did not affect the taste or correctness of his singing.

He was a little less than four years of age when a piano was brought to the house. The first note that was sounded, of course, brought him up. He was permitted to indulge his curiosity by running his fingers over and smelling the keys, and was then taken out of the parlor. As long as any one was playing he was contented to stay in the yard, and dance and caper to the music; but the moment it ceased, having discovered whence the sounds proceeded, and how they were produced, he was anxious to get to the instrument to continue them. One night the parlor and the piano had been left open, his mother had neglected to fasten her door, and he had escaped without her knowledge. Before day, the young ladies awoke, and, to their astonishment, heard Tom playing one of their pieces. He continued to play until the family at the usual time arose, and gathered around him to witness and wonder at his performance, which, though necessarily very imperfect, was marvelously strange; for, notwithstanding this was his first known effort at a tune, he played with both hands, and used the black as well as the white keys.

After a while he was allowed free access to the piano, and commenced playing everything he heard. He soon mastered all of that, and commenced composing for himself. He would sit at the piano for hours, playing over the pieces he had heard, then go out, and run and jump about the yard a little while, come back and play something of his own. Asked what it was, he replied, “ It is what the wind said to me,” or “ what the birds said to me,” or “ what the trees said to me,” or what something else said to him. No doubt what he was playing was connected, in his mind, with some sound or combination of sounds proceeding from those things, and not unfrequently the representation was so good as to render the similarity clear to others.

There was but one thing which seemed to give Tom as much pleasure as the sound of the piano. Between a wing and the body of the dwelling there is a hall, on the roof of which the rain falls, from the roof of the dwelling, and runs thence down a gutter. There is, in the combination of sounds produced by the

falling and running water, something so enchanting to Tom, that, from his early childhood to the time he left home, whenever it rained, whether by day or night, he would go into that passage and remain as long as the rain continued. When he was less than five years of age, having been there during a severe thunder-storm, he went to the piano and played what is now known as his *Rain Storm*, and said it was what the rain, the wind, and the thunder said to him. The perfection of the representation can be fully appreciated by those only who have heard the sounds by the falling of the water upon the roofs, and its running off through the gutters.

There was in the city of Columbus a German music teacher, who kept pianos and music for sale. The boys about the city having heard much of Tom, sometimes asked the boys of the family to take him to town, that they might hear him; upon these occasions they asked permission of this man to use one of his pianos, and though he would grant the permission, he would not hear him. If he was engaged he would send them to the back part of the store, which was a very deep one; if he had nothing to do, he would walk out into the street. When Tom was about eight years of age, a gentleman having obtained permission to exhibit him, hired a piano of this man and invited him to visit his concert. He indignantly rejected the invitation.

The man, however, succeeded in awakening the curiosity of the wife of the musician sufficiently to induce her to attend, and she gave her husband such accounts that he went the next night. After the performance was over, he approached the man and said:

“Sir, I give it up; the world has never seen such a thing as that little blind negro, and will never see such another.”

Encouraged by this, the exhibitor the next day applied to him to undertake to teach Tom. His reply then was:

“No, sir; I can't teach him anything; he knows more of music than we know, or can learn—we can learn all that great genius can reduce to rule and put in tangible form; he knows more than that; I do not even know what it is, but I see and feel it is something beyond my comprehension. All that can be done for him will be to let him hear fine playing; he will work it all out by himself after a while, but he will do it sooner by hearing fine music.”

It has been stated that Tom was born blind; in his infancy and for years the pupils of his eyes were as white and apparently as inanimate as those of a dead fish. But nature pointed out to him a remedy which gradually relieved him from total darkness, and in process of time conferred upon him, to a limited extent, the blessings of vision.

When he was three or four years of age, it was observed that he passed most of his time with his face upturned to the sun, as if gazing intently upon it, occasionally passing his hand back and forth with a rapid motion before his eyes; that was soon followed by thrusting his fingers into his eyes with a force which appeared to be almost sufficient to expel the eye-balls from their sockets; from this he proceeded to digging into one of them with sticks, until the blood would

run down his face. All this must have been pleasant to him, or he would not have done it; and there is no doubt that he is indebted to the stimulus thus applied to his eyes, for the measure of sight he now enjoys. When five or six years of age, a small, comparatively clear speck appeared in one of his eyes, and it was discovered that within a very small space he could see any bright object. That eye has continued to clear, until he is now able to see luminous bodies at a distance, and can distinguish small bodies by bringing them close to his eye. Persons that he knows well, he can distinguish at the distance of a few feet, and it is hoped that in process of time his sight will so far improve, as to relieve him from many of the difficulties to which he is subject.

The mere technicalities of music Tom learns without difficulty. Its substance he seems to comprehend intuitively. To teach him the notes, it was necessary only to sound them, and tell him their names. With the elements and principles of music he seemed to be familiar, long before he knew any of the names by which they were indicated; as a man going into a strange country may be perfectly acquainted with the appearance and nature of the material objects which meet his view, without knowing the names applied to them by the people.

Considering that in early life he learned nothing, and later but little from sight, that he is possessed by an overmastering passion, which so pervades his whole nature as to leave little room for interest in anything else, and the gratification of which has been indulged to the largest extent, it is not surprising that, to the outside world, he should exhibit but few manifestations of intellect as applicable to any of the ordinary affairs of life, or that those who see him only under its influence should conclude that he is idiotic.

The elegance, taste and power of his performances, his wonderful power of imitation, his extraordinary memory—not only of music, but of names, dates and events—his strict adherence to what he believes to be right, his uniform politeness, and his nice sense of propriety, afford to those who know him well, ample refutation of this opinion.

Tom sometimes indulges in some strange gymnastics upon the stage, which are considered by many a part of his stage training. So far from this being the case, it is but a slight outcropping of his usual exercises. If those who see him upon the stage could witness his performances in his room, and the enjoyment they afford him, they would perhaps regret the necessity of his restraint in public. He never engaged in the plays of children or manifested any interest in them. His amusements were all his own. With a physical organization of great power and vigor, and an exuberance of animal spirits, he naturally sought physical exercise; compelled by want of sight to limit himself to a small space, he put himself in almost every conceivable posture, and resorted to those exercises which required the most violent physical exertion. They are now necessary, certainly to his enjoyment, perhaps to his health.

Tom has been seen probably by more people than any one living being. He

has played in almost every important city in the United States and in a great many of the smaller towns—Paris, and most of the principal cities of England and Scotland; and everywhere he has astonished and pleased those who have heard him. Those who have observed him most closely, and attempted to investigate him most fully, pronounce him “a living miracle,” unparalleled, incomprehensible, such as has not been seen before, and probably will never be seen again.

TESTIMONIALS.

[From the Commercial.]

PITTSBURG, *April 6th*, 1866.

“In compliance with the request of the manager of ‘Blind Tom,’ who states that doubt is sometimes expressed in regard to the early development of ‘Blind Tom’s’ wonderful ‘musical talent,’ I would state that, in the year 1853, at which time I was residing in Columbus, Georgia, this boy (at that time about four years of age) was brought to my notice under the following circumstances:—While engaged in looking over some music, in company with a Professor of Music, in a music store, this boy was brought in by Mr. James N. Bethune (an old and respected citizen of that place), who stated that he believed this child to possess extraordinary talent. From the appearance of the boy, the Professor was somewhat skeptical, but determined to give him a chance. I lifted him to his seat at the piano; he played several pieces. The Professor then performed a piece of his own composition, not at that time published. To my surprise ‘Tom’ played it immediately after him, demonstrating at once, possession of wonderful and mysterious knowledge of music. At that time he was entirely blind, apparently idiotic, and displayed the same restlessness of body as at present. Upon expressing my astonishment at his evident genius, the Professor shrugged his shoulders, and said, ‘mere imitation; no progressive talent.’ I expressed my conviction to him that, if the boy lived, he would become the musical wonder of the world. Removing from that section, I saw no more of ‘Tom’ until April 6, 1866. He remembered the incident, and played for me the same piece, composed by the Professor, which he performed at that time, thirty-two years before.

“GEORGE A. KELLY,

“*Pittsburg, Pa.*”

“PHILADELPHIA, *Sept. 16th. 1865.*

“DEAR SIR: The undersigned desire to express to you their thanks for the opportunity afforded to them of hearing and seeing the wonderful performances of your protégé, the Blind Boy Pianist, Tom. They find it impossible to account for these immense results upon any hypothesis growing out of the known laws of art and science.

“In the numerous tests to which Tom was subjected in our presence, or by us, he invariably came off triumphant. Whether in deciding the pitch or component parts of chords the most difficult and dissonant; whether in repeating with correctness and precision any pieces—written or impromptu—played to him for the first and only time; whether in his improvisations or performances of compositions by Thalberg, Gottschalk, Verdi, and others; in fact, under every form of musical examination—and the experiments are too numerous to mention or enumerate—he showed a power and capacity ranking him among the most wonderful phenomena recorded in musical history.

“Accept, dear sir, the regards of your humble servants,

“B. C. CROSS,	J. H. REDNOR,
JAMES M. BECK,	CARL ROESE,
G. BLANDNER,	C. BLANGGAUR,
J. A. STERN,	J. A. GETZA,
J. C. BECKEL,	T. A. ROESE,
M. M. WARNER,	MRS. A. MAY,
MARY GROEBL,	THERESA HEGER,
JEAN LOUIS,	AUGUSTA ROESA.”
ALBERT G. EMERICK,	

LETTER FROM CHARLES HALLE.

“I have this day, for the *first* time, heard ‘Blind Tom’ play on the piano-forte, and I was very much *astonished* and *pleased* by his performance. His *natural musical gifts* seem to me *quite marvelous*, and the manner in which he repeated several pieces I played to him, which he had evidently *never heard before*, was most remarkable.

“Perhaps the most *striking* feature was the *extraordinary quickness* with which he named *any notes* struck by me on the piano, *either single or simultaneously*, however *discordant* they might be. I also named to him several notes, *choosing the most difficult and perplexing* intervals; these he *instantly* sang with *perfect truth* of intonation, although they might have puzzled a well-educated musician. Altogether ‘Blind Tom’ seems to be a *most singular and inexplicable* phenomenon.

“CHARLES HALLE.

GREENHEYS, *September 27th, 1866.*”

LETTER FROM I. MOSCHELES.

“In justice to Blind Tom, I have much pleasure in stating that I think him *marvelously gifted by nature*. I happened to be present at a performance of his at Southsea, and at the request of the Manager, began to *test his abilities* by extemporising a short rhythmical piece which he *imitated to perfection*, thus proving *beyond all doubt* that he *did not impose on the public by preparation*. I then went so far as to play him that part of my ‘Recollections of Ireland,’ in which the *three melodies are blended*, and even that he imitated with most of its *intricacies and changes*. Having tested his powers of *analyzing chords*, and found them *all that I could desire*, I next put my hands on *the keys at random*, and was *surprised* to hear him name *every note* of such *flagrant discord*. Tom’s *technical acquirements are very remarkable*, and his entertainment *full of interest* for the *musician and amateur*.

I. MOSCHELES.

SOUTHSEA, September 11th, 1866.”

N. B.—I. Moscheles was the preceptor of Mendelssohn and Thalberg.

LETTER FROM PROFESSOR OAKLEY.

MUSIC CLASS-ROOM,
 University of Edinburgh, Scotland, Dec. 17th, 1866. }

“I have much pleasure in adding, at the Manager’s request, my mite of testimony as to the marvelous accuracy of ear and retentive musical memory possessed by ‘Blind Tom,’ of whose powers I have here, to-day, witnessed some remarkable proofs. I played to him on the organ—an instrument to which he is unaccustomed—(1) the first eight bars of Mendelssohn’s Song No. 2, op. 34, which he reproduced after a single hearing; (2) a song of my own which he could not have previously heard, much of which he repeated; (3) a few bars of Bach’s Fugue, No. 17, book 2d of the ‘48,’ the subject of which, as well as fragments of the answer, he imitated correctly; (4) the whole of one of Handel’s Choruses from ‘Samson,’ parts of which Blind Tom also repeated.

“He not only can name any note, chord or discord which is struck, but can also (a much rarer faculty) suggest or originate the exact pitch of any note he is asked to sing, and that, moreover, whilst any amount of discordant noise was made on the organ, in order to disturb, if possible, his meditations.

“The two last instances I have to mention are perhaps the most striking. A ‘mixture’ stop (of three ranks) was drawn alone, and on a single key being pressed down, Tom accurately mentioned the three sounds which were heard. Lastly, I played to him a tune in two keys at once, which horrible discord he also faithfully reproduced.

“H. S. OAKLEY,

“Prof. of Music University of Edinburgh.”

BLIND TOM, THE GREAT NEGRO PIANIST.

“BLIND TOM’S” CONCERTS.

PIANOFORTE AND MUSIC WAREHOUSE, }
1 and 2 High Street, Montrose, Scotland. }

Permit me to call your attention to the concerts of “Blind Tom,” a negro boy pianist, of extraordinary and unaccountable musical powers. On Friday and Saturday last I had the pleasure of hearing him play in the Assembly Hall, and I cannot refrain, especially as I have no professional connection with him, from informing such of the musical public of Montrose and its vicinity, as have not already heard him, that the performances of this blind negro are so wonderful that no one possessed of musical taste should lose an opportunity of listening to them.

I may say, without the slightest exaggeration, that Tom’s execution of all kinds of music—from the most classical works of Beethoven, Bach, Mendelssohn, and others, down to the simplest plantation melody of “the Sunny South”—is unsurpassed by that of the best professional performers of the day.

Blind Tom’s last appearance in Montrose will be this evening, in the Assembly Hall, at eight o’clock, when he will again play classical selections from Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Bach, Mozart, &c. His pianoforte solos will be taken from the compositions of Thalberg, Liszt, Chopin and others. He will also sing various songs from popular operas, and ballads from Moore and Burns, as well as some of his own composition.

As a proof of his extraordinary musical gifts, Blind Tom invites any member of the audience to play any piece of music unknown to him, and he, after a first hearing, re-plays it with the most perfect accuracy, however intricate or elaborate in harmony. He can also analyse any chord or discord struck on the instrument, if he is within hearing, naming almost as rapidly as they are struck, each individual note. As an additional proof of his remarkable powers of imitation, he gives recitations in Greek, Latin, German, French, as well as imitations of the Scotch bagpipe, the musical box, the hurdy-gurdy, the Scotch fiddler, the American stump orator, comic speakers, and, in short, any sound he may hear.

I am, your most obedient servant,

JOHN LAW.

December 3d, 1866.

THE VOCAL PROGRAMME OF THIS EVENING

WILL BE SELECTED FROM THE FOLLOWING

POPULAR SONGS.

ROCKED IN THE CRADLE OF THE DEEP.

THE POETRY BY MRS. WILLARD. THE MUSIC BY J. P. KNIGHT.

Rock'd in the cradle of the deep,
 I lay me down in peace to sleep ;
 Secure I rest upon the wave,
 For thou, O Lord ! hast power to save.
 I know thou wilt not slight my call,
 For thou dost mark the sparrow's fall,
 And calm and peaceful shall I sleep,
 Rock'd in the cradle of the deep.

And calm and peaceful, &c.

And such the trust that still were mine,
 Tho' stormy winds sweep o'er the brine ;
 Or tho' the tempest's fiery breath
 Rous'd me from slumber to wreck and death !
 In ocean cave, still safe with thee,
 The germ of immortality !
 And calm and peaceful shall I sleep,
 Rock'd in the cradle of the deep.

And calm and peaceful, &c.

MOTHER, DEAR MOTHER, I STILL THINK OF THEE.

POETRY BY CAPT. BURGESS. MUSIC BY W. P. HOWARD.

Mother, dear mother, how sad is my plight,
 So far from thy care—away from thy sight:
 No lov'd ones are near, no loved ones so dear,
 To bid me a welcome, a fond welcome here:
 My soul has grown weary; it findeth no rest
 Away from the idols that rise in my breast:
 But mother, dear mother, weep not for me—
 Mother, dear mother, I still think of thee!

Mother, dear mother, lonely I roam,
 Afar from thy voice, away from my home;
 Thy smile, it was ever my rapture to meet,
 My sister's affections so gentle and sweet,
 Alas! gloomy shadows now hover around,
 A brother beloved lies low in the ground;
 Though waves of affliction rise over me,
 Mother, dear mother, I'll still think of thee.

How often emotions and dark visions wild
 Do sadden the heart—the heart of thy child!
 Yet dreams of the past like rainbows will come,
 With traces of childhood's loved sunny, bright home;
 Those pleasures are vanished; ah! once they were mine,
 Unshadowed by sorrow, their memory doth shine;
 But when this existence ceaseth to be,
 Mother, in heaven I'll there welcome thee!

 THE OLD SEXTON.

BY HENRY RUSSELL.

Nigh to a grave that was newly made,
 Lean'd a Sexton old on his earthworn spade:
 His work was done, and he paus'd to wait
 A fun'ral train thro' the open gate.
 A relic of bygone days was he,
 And his locks were as white as the foamy sea.
 And these words came from his lips so thin,
 "I gather them in, I gather them in,
 Gather, gather, gather, I gather them in."

I gather them in ! for man and boy,
 Year after year of grief and joy,
 I've buildd the houses that lie around
 In ev'ry nook of this burial ground ;
 Mother and daughter, father and son
 Come to my solitude one by one ;
 But come they as strangers or come they kin,
 I gather them in, I gather them in.

Gather, &c.

Many are near me, but still I'm alone ;
 I'm king of the dead, and I make my throne
 On a monument slab of marble cold,
 And my scepter of rule is the spade I hold :
 Come they from cottage or come they from hall,
 Mankind are my subjects, all, all, all ;
 Let them loiter in pleasure, or toilfully spin,
 I gather them in, I gather them in.

Gather, &c.

I gather them in ! and their final rest
 Is here, down here, in the earth's dark breast,
 And the Sexton ceas'd, for the fun'ral train
 Wound mutely o'er that solemn plain,
 And I said to my heart, When time is told,
 A mightier voice than that Sexton's old
 Will sound o'er the last trump's dreadful din :
 I gather them in, I gather them in.

Gather, &c.

THE IVY GREEN.

BY HENRY RUSSELL.

A dainty plant is the ivy green
 That creepeth o'er ruins old,
 Of right choice fruit are his meals, I ween,
 In his cell so lone and cold.
 The walls must be crumbled, the stones decayed,
 To pleasure his dainty whim,
 And the mold'ring dust that years have made
 Is a merry meal for him.
 Creeping where no life is seen,
 A rare old plant is the ivy green.

Creeping, &c.

BLIND TOM, THE GREAT NEGRO PIANIST.

Fast he stealeth, tho' he wears no wings.
 And a staunch old heart has he ;
 How closely he twineth, how closely he clings
 To his friend, the huge oak tree !
 And sliely he traileth along the ground,
 And his leaves he gently waves,
 As he joyously hugs and crawleth round
 The mold of dead men's graves.
 Creeping where grim death has been
 A rare old plant is the ivy green.
 Creeping, &c.

Whole ages have fled, and their works decay'd,
 And nations have scatter'd been,
 But the stout old ivy shall never fade,
 From its hale and hearty green.
 The brave old plant in its lonely days
 Shall fatten upon the past,
 For the stateliest building man can raise
 Is the ivy's food at last.
 Creeping where no life is seen,
 A rare old plant is the ivy green.
 Creeping, &c.

 THEN YOU'LL REMEMBER ME.

BALLAD.

WRITTEN BY ALFRED BUNN, ESQ. COMPOSED BY W. W. BALFE.

When other lips and other hearts,
 Their tales of love shall tell,
 In language whose excess imparts
 The pow'r they feel so well,
 There may perhaps in such a scene
 Some recollection be,
 Of days that have as happy been,
 And you'll remember me.
 And you'll remember, &c.

When coldness or deceit shall slight
 The beauty now they prize,
 And deem it but a faded light
 Which beams within your eyes.

BLIND TOM, THE GREAT NEGRO PIANIST.

When hollow hearts shall wear a mask
'Twill break your own to see,
In such a moment I but ask
That you'll remember me.
That you'll remember, &c.

SCENES THAT ARE BRIGHTEST.

BALLAD.

WORDS BY E. FITZBALL. COMPOSED BY W. VINCENT WALLACE.

Scenes that are brightest
May charm awhile,
Hearts which are lightest
And eyes that smile ;
Yet o'er and above us
Tho' nature beam,
With none to love us,
How sad they seem.
With none, &c.

Words cannot scatter
The thoughts we fear,
For tho' they flatter,
They mock the ear.
Hope will still deceive us
With fearful cost,
And when they leave us
The heart is lost.
And when, &c.

WHEN THE SWALLOWS HOMEWARD FLY.

BY FRANZ ABT.

When the swallows homeward fly,
When the roses wither'd lie,
When the list'ning hill and dale
Hear no more the nightingale ;
In these accents would my heart
To thy soul its grief impart :
When I thus thy image lose,
Can I, ah can I e'er know repose ?
Can I, &c.

BLIND TOM, THE GREAT NEGRO PIANIST.

When the swan doth southward rove
 To seek the cooling grove ;
 When the golden crimson'd west
 Blushes o'er the sun at rest,
 In these accents would my heart
 To thy soul my grief impart,
 When I thus thy image lose,
 Can I, ah can I e'er know repose ?

Can I, &c.

Beating heart, why thus lament ?
 Woe is thine, then be content ;
 Tho' on earth no more we rove,
 Softly signing vows of love,
 Find, my heart, in this, relief,
 Yielding to these words belief :
 I shall see thee yet again,
 Though to-day we part in pain.

Though to-day, &c.

 OH WHISPER WHAT THOU FEELEST.

BALLAD.

WRITTEN BY ALFRED BUNN, ESQ. COMPOSED BY BRINLEY RICHARDS.

Oh whisper what thou feelest, that no unhallow'd ear
 May listen to the music of words to me so dear !
 But if their tones should falter,
 And on thy lip should die,
 Oh let their honeyed sweetness
 Be gather'd from thy sigh.

Oh whisper, &c.

The bashful bird of even, that shuns the pluméd throng,
 Pours forth her plaintive music
 When none can hear her song ;
 And so do thou but whisper the sounds that I would hear,
 When their enchanting softness can reach no other ear.

Oh whisper, &c.

MARY OF ARGYLE.

WRITTEN BY CHARLES JEFFREYS. COMPOSED BY S. NELSON.

I have heard the mavis singing
 His love song to the morn ;
 I have seen the dew-drop clinging
 To the rose just newly-born.
 But a sweeter song has cheered me
 At the ev'nings gentle close ;
 And I've seen an eye still brighter
 Than the dew-drop on the rose ;
 'Twas thy voice, my gentle Mary,
 And thine artless, winning smile,
 That made this world an Eden,
 Bonny Mary of Argyle !

Tho' thy voice may lose its sweetness,
 And thine eye its brightness too,
 Tho' thy step may lack its fleetness,
 And thy hair its sunny hue,
 Still to me wilt thou be dearer
 Than all the world shall own ;
 I have loved thee for thy beauty,
 But not for that alone :
 I have watched thy heart, dear Mary,
 And its goodness was the wile
 That has made thee mine forever,
 Bonny Mary of Argyle !

A HOME BY THE SEA.

Oh, give me a home by the sea,
 Where wild waves are crested with foam,
 Where shrill winds are caroling free,
 As o'er the blue waters they come ;
 For I'd list to the ocean's loud roar,
 And joy in its stormiest glee,
 Nor ask in this wide world for more
 Than a home by the deep heaving sea.

A home, a home, a home by the deep heaving sea,
 A home, a home, a home by the deep heaving sea.

BLIND TOM, THE GREAT NEGRO PIANIST.

At morn, when the sun from the east
Comes mantled in crimson and gold,
Whose hues o'er the billows are cast,
Which sparkle with splendor untold,
Oh, then by the shore would I stray,
And roam as the halcyon free,
From envy and care far away,
At my home by the deep heaving sea

A home, a home, &c.

At eve, when the moon, in her pride,
Rides, queen of the soft summer night,
And leans on the murmuring tide,
With floods of her silvery light,
Oh, earth has no beauty so rare,
No place that is dearer to me ;
Then give me, so free and so fair,
A home by the deep heaving sea.

A home, a home, &c.

BLIND TOM.

Oh, tell me the form of the soft summer air,
That tosses so gently the curls of my hair ;
It breathes on my lips, it fans my warm cheek,
Yet gives me no answer, though often I speak ;
I feel it play o'er me, refreshing and kind,
Yet I cannot touch it—I'm blind, oh, I'm blind.

And music, what is it, and where does it dwell ?
I sink and I rise with its cadence and swell,
While it touches my heart with its deep thrilling strain,
Till pleasure, till pleasure is turned into pain.
What brightness of hue is with music combined ?
Will any one tell me ?—I'm blind, oh, I'm blind.

The perfume of flowers that are hovering nigh—
And what are they—on what kind of wings do they fly ?
Are not they sweet angels, who come to delight
A poor little boy who knows not of sight ?
The sun, moon, and stars, are to me undefined,
Oh, tell me what light is—I'm blind, oh, I'm blind.

OPINIONS
OF THE
ENGLISH AND AMERICAN PRESS.

A M E R I C A N :

[From the Philadelphia Inquirer, 27th December, 1865.]

“**BLIND TOM.**—One peculiarity about this extraordinary genius is, that rough, uncouth as he appears, seemingly holding all national attributes in obedience, he has the power to draw around him the *elite* of the city. Men of intellect, men of mind, all go to see Tom—not to witness his antics, not to listen to his imitations, but to be astonished, confounded, and amazed, at the effect he produces on the piano. His notes are so thrilling, and his execution so perfect and so startling as to amuse every listener. The piano itself seems gifted, and sends forth in reverberation, praises, as it were, to Blind Tom. There is music in all things, but Blind Tom is the Temple wherein music dwells. He is a sort of doorkeeper besides, and when he opens the portals, music seems to issue forth to wake the soul to ecstasy.”

[From the Public Ledger, September 27th, 1864.]

“**MUSICAL GENIUS—BLIND TOM.**—At first view such a phenomenon as Blind Tom might seem one of the most humiliating facts to the musical world that can possibly be conceived. Here is a blind, half-witted black boy, who cannot speak, in private, without stuttering, who cannot remain quiet for five

minutes, whether on or off the stage, but must keep tumbling and jumping, or rather spinning round and over, hardly like a human being at all; and yet this half-idiot looking boy has powers as a musical performer, such probably as no one has ever attained by any amount of art or practice. Many Professors of Music of great eminence have been ready, after listening to him, to declare that they would never touch the piano again. What he has done in public in the way of playing the most difficult pieces after hearing them but once, and with a perfection that years of practice could not usually apply, are known to all the lovers of music in this city.

“The secret of this wonderful power is the most perfect ear for the harmonies of sound ever observed—‘only this, and nothing more.’ To him everything is music. Discords do not seem to disturb him, but his ear catches every harmony, and his whole being seems entranced and controlled by it. Let him stand with his back to a piano, and any number of chords be struck, and he will instantly tell every note sounded, showing that he has been able to discriminate, and his memory to retain distinctly and perfectly each sound. The Phrenologists say that memory is in proportion to clearness and strength of the impression produced at first, and this must be the case with him. From two years old this remarkable power of sound over him has been noticed. He has been blind from birth, and it would seem here, as often observed before, that, by a compensative law of our being, in proportion as one sense is defective, the expenditure of vital energy thus saved is absorbed by some other sense. Probably all our sensations are the result of vibrations, and the pulsations of light that usually enter and give all their exquisite pleasure through the eye-ball, are in his case compensated for by the pulsations of sound, which strike on an ear possessed of nerves of double delicacy and vital energy from the absorption and concentration of two senses in one.

“Blind Tom is not, however, the senseless being that most imagine him, but rather like one completely guided and governed by this one sense alone. As a lad, the song of a bird would lead him to wander off into the woods, and then the sound of the flute would bring him to those who went in search of him. His great desire now is to go to Europe in the spring, and have a brass band. But his ear finds music in all sounds. As a lad, his mother beating the other children, and all her harsh words and their cries would be to him a source of exquisite pleasure, the whole sounds being reproduced, the scolding, the beating, and the crying, by his imitative power, and remembered word for word, and note for note. As the snake which charms the bird with its eye is itself charmed by the power of sound, so is he under the same sort of control of this most wonderfully developed sense. It would, perhaps, be worth trying whether the same tension and perfection of the nerves of the ear could not be temporarily produced by the use of the Indian extract of hemp.

“Perhaps a proper study of the case of this lad might show to what extent all (though in less degree) might be educated through music. It is certainly this alone that can be most easily developed; probably the highest and best

emotions might be thus permanently excited within him, while the desire for those pleasures leads him to put forth intellectual efforts that nothing else can. It was thus he taught himself the piano, from hearing the young ladies of Mr. Bethune's family play their music—a power that first developed itself, to Mr. Bethune's astonishment, at midnight, one night when, the house and piano having been left open, he crept into the parlor (then being quite a child) and awoke the family by playing their most difficult pieces. By degrees he was called in, as a curiosity, to play when white visitors came to the plantation; and at last the sound of carriage-wheels always brought him to the house. His clappings at his own performances, and glee at each new feat, now show the simplicity of his nature. But his performances in music show how the highest results of art and study are most easily reached by this lad in his one-sided culture and development—that of the ear alone. It is with him a sort of inspiration. The science of music he will probably never be able to master. But we must remember that the art of it preceded the science in Egypt, in Palestine, in Greece, and in Rome, by long ages. Indeed, it was the music of the Hebrews, and then of the Christian Church, that gave birth to scientific music, and alone developed it, until that of the opera gave rise to a distinct branch of the culture. This reacted powerfully on sacred music itself. Blind Tom at present likes operatic music best. Though he loves the organ somewhat, he probably seldom goes near any church, where, indeed, his presence would soon disturb any congregation.”

[From the Albany (N. Y.) Argus, January, 1860.]

“BLIND TOM,” THE NEGRO PIANIST.—We yesterday were so fortunate as to attend a *seance* given by “Blind Tom,” the negro pianist, at Hidley's music room. As an exhibition of incomprehensible genius, excelling in its simplest manifestations the triumphs of severe art, we never saw the performances of this prodigy equaled. A wild, uncouth figure, angular at all points which should be curved, and curved at all points that should present acute lines—loose-jointed, close-wooled, thick-lipped, sprawl-footed, with forehead almost covered with kinky locks, eye-balls prominent and distended, and an idiotic, staring expression of countenance—in short, a regular specimen of the African in his unadulterated and barbarous condition, before he has been elevated by the influence of social surroundings or Caucasian infusion. Such is Blind Tom as he first strikes the eye and impresses the mind of the observer. You ask the genial Georgia gentleman who accompanies him what history he has, and when you learn that he was born a slave on a plantation, and brought up a chattel, you feel that he is just about what other “niggers” might be, who were “developed” under the same circumstances. But a street car with a tinkling bell passes up the street. Instantaneously a new sort of intelligence flashes over the black face. The attention is fixed, and mind seems really awaking from the ashes of idiocy. “What

note is that, 'Tom?' "C sharp," is the reply, without a second's pause. You test the sound at a piano, and find the lad correct. He has reached by lightning process of intuition what you can determine only with scientific aids. Or without giving any premonition of your design, you walk to a piano, and strike a dozen or twenty notes of the most difficult and intricate combinations, rapidly as possible. "What notes are those, Tom?" asks the agent, and with voluble rapidity, the transformed idiot repeats them, each by name, without a single error. You seat the ungainly figure at a piano-stool. He is to be tested now in his perception of music. All negroes have a love for melody, and acquire wonderful proficiency in rendering it; but the negro does not understand classical music. Does he not? Try this one. Here is a classical production—the "Sonata Pathétique" of Beethoven, covering eight or ten pages, and ask any young lady who fancies she has graduated at the piano, whether it is difficult or not. "We will have this Sonata, Tom," says the musical director to his loose-fingered, thick-lipped protégé, and instantly the wonderful process of interpretation begins. This blind boy, who never saw a note of music in his life, plays you the entire work, while musical critics follow him with eyes and ears, and he makes no mistake—not one false register, or slur, or discord, or omission. Most wonderful, truly; but wonderful simply as a feat of prodigious memory, thoroughly disciplined—proving nothing of instinctive apprehension. No, but let your Albany Professor sit down at the piano and improvise. He does so; a difficult conception, which he himself could not render twice, and which it would take you twenty-four hours to commit. Meanwhile, Tom grows most strangely antic. He throws himself into grotesque shapes, like an automaton at a fantocini show. He claps the air with his hands, whistles through his teeth, capers about and see-saws up and down. The professor has finished, and with a mumbling remark, "That is jest as ea-sy!" Tom seats himself, and imitates the improvisation, note by note, perfectly; then gives his own idea of it, and accompanies that with variations. So, tested with a dozen pieces, he renders them at once upon hearing them. This is proof of intuition. Now test the power of analysis. Three pianos are opened; at two of them persons present hammer away, with the design of producing the most perfect discord imaginable; at the third piano the professor makes a run of twenty notes. The confusion ceases and Tom repeats in a moment each of the twenty notes sounded. Still another test. Tom takes the stool himself. With his right hand he plays "Yankee Doodle" in B flat. With his left hand he performs "Fisher's Hornpipe" in C. At the same time he sings "Tramp, Tramp," in another key—maintaining three distinct processes in that discord, and apparently without any effort whatever. "Most marvelous," you say, "but can he express as well as he perceives?" The gentlemanly director will let you see. He asks Tom to render "Home, Sweet Home," by Thalberg. You know that of all productions in the current repertoire, there are none which have finer or more difficult shades than this. Blind Tom proceeds, and were you to close your eyes you could not tell but Thalberg himself was at the instrument, so perfect and so exquisite is

the conception and the touch. Then you have renderings in imitation from Chopin, from Gottschalk, from Vieuxtemps, from anybody you will mention who has been deemed a master of the art. And you turn away convinced—surfeited with marvels, satisfied that you have witnessed one of the most incomprehensible facts of the time.

Some curious metaphysical questions grow out of these remarkable demonstrations. What is this boy? A negro—belonging to an unintellectual race; himself an idiot. But what is intellect and what is idiocy? Can he be an idiot with whom those achievements are most ordinary which in others are pronounced the grandest evidences of masterly genius? And what is it to be “developed”? Where is the narrow dividing line that separates the philosopher from the fool? Here is a monstrosity—a gorgon with angel’s wings; a sunflower with the blush of a mignonette and the fragrance of a mountain rose. There is no law by which to measure and determine such exhibitions as this. Meanwhile, we only state what we saw in all its astonishing features, and leave our readers to determine for themselves whether the Chinese transmigration theory is correct—whether the soul of some unfortunate defunct musician, misbehaving on earth, has been banished into the awkward and angular body of Blind Tom.

ENGLISH.

[From the London Times, August 18th, 1866.]

ST. JAMES’ HALL.—For some time past the wonder-seekers of London have been amused by a series of performances, vocal and on the pianoforte, by a negro boy called Blind Tom. The boy, *who is not only blind, but completely and unmistakably idiotic*, executes *difficult* music with a facility that under the circumstances is remarkable, and goes through several feats which rather indicate mnemonic and imitative powers than a genius for music, properly so called. Thus, while he plays *one air with his right hand* he accompanies it by *another air in another key with his left*, and *sings a third air in a third key at the same time*, thus giving a specimen of a school of harmony which is peculiar to himself. He has, moreover, been taught to associate the notes ~~in~~ *the* piano with the letters of the entire alphabet, so that when one of the spectators, at the request of the exhibitor, holds up an object, and the exhibitor strikes on the instrument the notes corresponding to the letters that compose the name of that object, Tom boldly declares whether his talent has been tested by (say) a hat, a half-crown piece, or a fan. Another exploit is the execution on the piano of *a tune heard for the first time only a moment before*. Even while he is displaying his peculiar gifts, the appearance of utter idiocy remains; his face goes into curious contortions when his notes become more than commonly expressive, and by clapping his own hands he responds to the applause of the audience. There is no reason

to believe or even to conjecture anything like imposition in the performance of Blind Tom, whom we would class not so much with musicians as with the many persons who, otherwise idiotic, achieve astounding feats in the way of arithmetical calculation. However, class him as we may, *it is an historical fact that he has drawn audiences large enough to crowd even the great room of St. James' Hall.*

[From the London Daily News, July 23rd, 1866.]

“‘BLIND TOM,’ A MUSICAL PRODIGY.—A musical wonder has just arrived from America, in the person of a blind negro, whose power of playing the piano ‘by ear’ is as remarkable as his appearance is odd and amusing. He not only performs solos with a full command of all the dexterity which distinguishes pianoforte soloists, but is able to play from memory, after once hearing it, any piece of music, no matter how elaborate, performed before him for the first time by an accomplished player. He can play two distinct tunes at one time—one with each hand—and sing another tune simultaneously, and can perform other clever musical feats which would puzzle the best trained musicians. His manners are eccentric, and he applauds himself even more loudly and delightedly than the audience applaud him. Taken altogether, his performance is a musical curiosity, and fully justifies the account given of him about four years ago in *All The Year Round*. His first appearance in England was made at a private *soiree* at the Hanover Square Rooms, but he will doubtless perform in public in a few days, before the London season finishes.”

[From the Manchester Guardian, Sept. 26th.]

We were quite prepared from the metropolitan press to find in Blind Tom some extraordinary qualities, fortified as their statements were by the testimony of M. Moscheles, who tested the alleged powers of this nigger youth at Southsea, and publicly expressed his opinion that Tom was “marvelously gifted by nature.” After hearing him last night at the Theatre Royal we can most conscientiously endorse this opinion; but to give in writing anything like an accurate description of him is utterly impossible. The fingers fly over the keyboard, and he seems like one possessed. Did not Shakespeare conceive this being when he describes Caliban being touched with the magical sounds heard in Prospero’s Island? His first performance was a march vigorously given, and displaying great strength of hand, indicated by running octaves with both hands with great rapidity. Thalberg’s “Sweet Home” followed, then Thalberg’s “Lily Dale,” for the left hand alone, and two songs, one of which was “Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep,” in

which he gives the low G with considerable power. Then followed some tests as to his power of analysing chords. Is all this mere instructive imitation and memory, or not? Behind that strange visage, and underneath that imperfectly-organized brain, what is going on? We dare not speculate. He is evidently a freak of nature, but he must be **heard and seen** to be in any degree comprehended.

[From the Manchester Courier, September 26th.]

“Prodigies” of all kinds are presented ever and anon to the public now-a-days; but we have had nothing yet produced so truly marvelous as the negro phenomenon known as Blind Tom, who appeared for the first time in Manchester at the Theatre Royal last night. In order to test Blind Tom’s powers of memory, Mr. Joule gave a short impromptu, avoiding any marked rhythm or subject, but which was imitated very cleverly. To test his powers of analyzing chords, Mr. Joule played him the following discordant combinations: The chord of B flat in the left hand, with the chord of A with the flat 5th and sharp 6th in right hand; the chord of E in the left hand, and the chord of D, two sharps, in the right; the chord of A, three flats, in the left hand, with that of A, three sharps, in the right. All these chords were at once correctly named by enumerating each note in succession from the lowest. Mr. Seymour subsequently was called upon and gave a subject, which he reproduced upon the pianoforte with great success.

[From the Glasgow Daily Herald, January 2, 1867.]

“Blind Tom,” the wonderful negro boy pianist, made his *debut* in Glasgow yesterday, when he gave three of his entertainments, or rather musical exhibitions, in the Merchants’ Hall—two during the day, and one in the evening. He is, without doubt, an extraordinary lad. Born blind, though he is now able to distinguish light from darkness, and **having** a defect in some of his mental faculties, though what that defect is, it is very difficult to say. Nature seems to have made up for these deficiencies by endowing him with a marvelously acute ear and a retentive memory. It is not uncommon to find blind people with their other senses much more highly developed and much more susceptible of impression than in people possessing all their faculties; but in no case have we ever heard or known of one with auditory nerves so fine or with memory so powerful as “Blind Tom.” Mozart, when a mere child, was noted for the delicacy of his ear, and for his ability to produce music on a first hearing; but Burney, in his “History of Music,” records no instance at all coming up to this negro boy, for his attainments in phonetics and his power of retention and reproduction of sound. We

don't think it is possible for Tom to be a great composer, though his guardian and tutor, Dr. Howard, is hopeful that he will, in spite of his mental weakness. We believe, however, he has already produced some very remarkable pieces; but his *forte* appears to rest more in imitation and reproduction, and certainly his powers of this description constitute him an extraordinary prodigy. The public, so often "taken in" by would-be prodigious wonders of creation, are naturally suspicious when any phenomenon of this kind is presented to them; but the thorough genuineness of Tom's performances at once disarms all suspicion. He plays first a number of difficult passages from the best composers; and then any one is invited to come forward and perform any piece he likes, the more difficult the more acceptable, and if original, still more preferable. Tom immediately sits down at the piano and produces *verbatim et literatim* the whole of what he has just heard. To show that it is not at all necessary that he should be acquainted with any piece beforehand to reproduce it, he invites any one to strike a number of notes simultaneously with the hand or with both hands, and immediately, as we heard him do yesterday, he repeats at length, and without the slightest hesitation, the whole of the letters, with all their inflections, representing the notes. Nor are his wondrous powers confined to the piano, on which he can produce imitations of various instruments and play two different tunes—one in common time and a second in triple—while he sings a third; but he can with the voice produce, with the utmost accuracy, any note which his audience may suggest. Yesterday afternoon for instance, he was asked to sing B flat, F sharp, and the upper A, a very difficult combination, and beginning with the latter, he at once satisfied his auditors of his success. One very funny feat he executed, which, as much as anything else, showed what he could do. When at Aberdeen, as Dr. Howard explained, Tom heard in a large ante-room adjoining the hall where he was, a teacher of dancing tuning his fiddle, the strings of which, apparently, had been rather difficult to get tightened up to proper tune. Tom had but to listen, and he retained every sound which the dancing-master produced. Tom's imitation on the piano—first of the striking of the violin-strings with the fingers for some time, after the manner of violinists, then seeing if they corded well, again touching up the strings, anon giving a little bit of a polka, and once more adjusting the strings, and so on, all exactly as he heard it—was as amusing as it was astonishing. No one with an ear for music should miss the opportunity of going to hear him ere he leaves.

[From the Edinburgh Scotsman.]

BLIND TOM.—Last night, this negro boy, of whose remarkable performances so much has been said and written of late, made his first appearance here in the Operetta House. There was a crowded audience, among whom were a number of the musical cognoscenti of Edinburgh, whose curiosity had been excited by

the reputation he had gained in America, as well as by the favorable notices of the press in this country, and the testimony of such men as Moscheles and Halle. Any one, to look at Blind Tom, would never imagine he possessed such wonderful musical powers. His appearance and behavior are not prepossessing; it is only when he sits down to the instrument that he becomes, as it were, inspired. He played several pieces on this occasion from memory, and displayed great execution, and a greater amount of feeling and expression than we were prepared to expect. One of the best of these was the fantasia on the Hundredth Psalm, which was brilliantly executed. One of his most extraordinary feats is the reproduction of any piece once played over to him. On this occasion, Mr. Laurie, who was present, at the invitation of the manager, ascended the platform and played a composition by R. Muller, which occupied nearly five minutes. He no sooner left the instrument than Blind Tom took his seat and gave a correct imitation. His ability to name any combination of notes, no matter how disconnected and puzzling the intervals, was fully proved. The professional gentleman we have named struck simultaneously no less than twenty notes on the piano, and these Blind Tom named without a single mistake. Enough was done last night to convince all present that Blind Tom is one of those phenomena which are totally inexplicable on any known principle. He is to perform during the week, and we would advise our readers to go and judge for themselves, satisfied that they will be both astonished and pleased.

[From the Dundee Advertiser.]

BLIND TOM.—This extraordinary musical prodigy gave two performances in Dundee yesterday, and on each occasion the powers displayed by him were so marvelous as to verge upon the miraculous. Our readers must not suppose that his proficiency is merely of an ordinary kind, or that his notoriety is another species of Barnumism. The letter we published yesterday from a private friend, in whose opinions we place the greatest confidence, shows that it is not so; and we believe the opinions of all who yesterday heard him will be found to be those of astonishment and admiration. History affords no parallel to Blind Tom. His ability would be marvelous even if he had his eyesight; but, as we have before remarked, when it is considered that he is blind, it is beyond measure strange. Unless one sees or hears him play he is unable properly to understand the extent of his ability. Test him how you may, he never fails. His memory is as miraculous as his musical powers; and he plays over a piece he has never heard before with almost infallible exactitude. Yesterday, several gentlemen went to the platform, and played over pieces; and during the time they were so occupied it was amusing to witness Tom's contortions of his body and his movements generally. He swayed himself about; his eyeballs rolled; his fingers twitched involuntarily; and he seemed like one possessed; and on being allowed to seat himself ~~at~~ the piano, he repeated from memory the various pieces which had been

played to him. In the evening, Mr. Hirst played over a number of pieces of the most difficult character, all of which Tom produced with fidelity.

On inquiry we find that his proficiency is a natural gift. From his earliest infancy he betrayed the utmost interest in musical sounds of every kind—the cries of animals, the moaning of the wind, the rushing of waters, and the like; and when he was allowed to go out in the fields, if he heard a bird sing, he rushed off towards it with frantic delight. We publish a letter we received the other day from an intimate friend in another town—a gentleman of great musical taste, and no little executive ability—who is well qualified to give an opinion on such matters. He says:

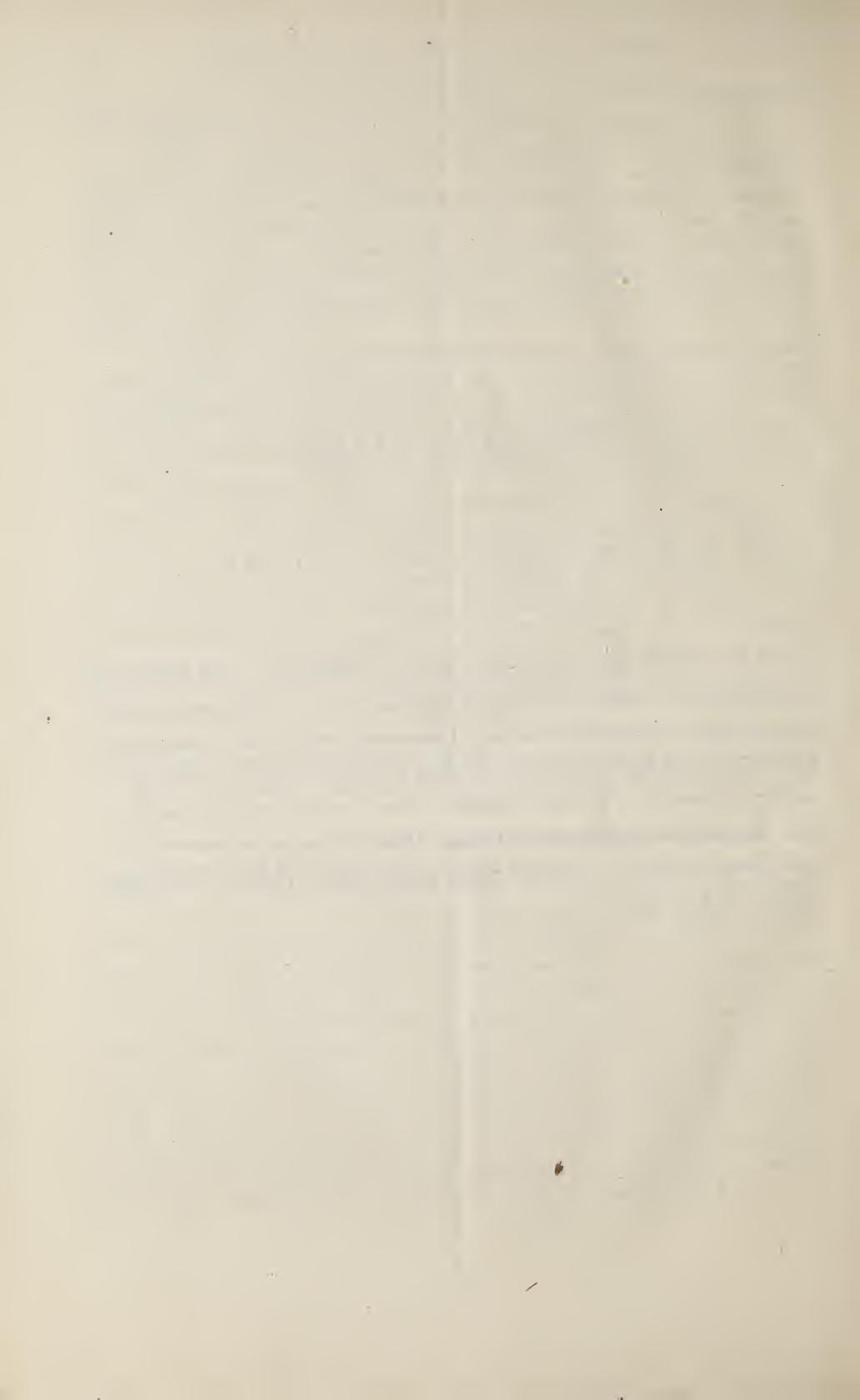
“ I presume you have not heard Blind Tom play? If not, you never heard a better performer. Like most people, of course, I was inclined to regard this wonderful prodigy as a wonderful humbug; but I assure you, that, so far from this being the case, or anything like it, Tom is as genuine an artist, and possesses as much (and, for anything I can tell, a great deal more) musical talent or power, either as regards the execution of the compositions of others or of his own, as either Thalberg, Halle, Madame Goddard, or anybody else you ever listened to. I write merely to disabuse your mind of the common impression which we are all apt to form of these singular geniuses, and very strongly recommend you not only to *hear* him play, but privately test him (as I have done) in any way you like. Improvise to him as difficult, or elaborate, or out-of-the-way piece as you please, and he will instantly reproduce it. Now, this is no common gift; and therefore you and I, and all who know anything of music, should use our best efforts to let the public know that, so far from there being anything in the nature of clap-trap about Tom, he is, in fact, a musical gem of the first water. Of course, I have nothing to do with him, but I have been so highly pleased with his performances, that I thought it might be as well to let you know beforehand (in case you have not already heard him) what my own real impression is of him.”

He not only repeats every piece he hears from memory, but he improvises and composes; and he last night sung a song of music of his own composition—“ Mother, dear Mother, I Still Think of Thee ”—of great merit for its simple sweetness and pathos. As he cannot possibly remain longer in Dundee than to-night, we would earnestly urge upon all who can afford it, the absolute duty of seeing and hearing this wonderful blind negro boy. He is only seventeen, but no man of any age could surpass him for executive ability, as his testimonials from such men as Mescheles, Halle, &c., prove. He performs two or three different melodies at the same time, and plays with his back to the piano with apparently as much ability as in the ordinary position. We would especially recommend all who are interested in anthropology, phrenology, and psychology, to see and hear him for themselves. His ability is a singular confutation of the theories of Hunt and Blake about the inferiority of the negro; for we may challenge any white man to compete with him in perfect safety. His parallel is not to be found the world over, nor in any time of which the records are known.

PROGRAMME.

SPECIAL NOTICE:

BLIND TOM can only play what he hears or improvises. Until about two years ago a list of pieces that Tom had heard was kept, numbering nearly 2,000. Unfortunately this catalogue was lost. Since that period he has heard perhaps 3,000 pieces, and his repertoire now numbers upwards of 5,000, entirely at his memory's disposal. From this extensive store Tom will introduce selections from BEETHOVEN, BACH, MENDELSSOHN, CHOPIN, THALBERG, GOTTSCHALK, and others; and also give his marvelous and amusing Imitations, Recitations, Anecdotes &c.. &c.



BLIND TOM'S CONCERTS.

PROGRAMME.

Classical Selections.

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| 1. Sonata, "Pathétique"..... <i>Beethoven</i> | 7. Songs without Words..... <i>Mendelssohn</i> |
| 2. "Pastorale" opus 26....." | 8. "Wedding March"....." |
| 3. "Moonlight," 21....." | 9. Concerto in G minor....." |
| 4. Andante..... <i>Mendelssohn</i> | 10. Gavotte in G minor..... <i>Bach</i> |
| 5. Fugue in A minor..... <i>Bach</i> | 11. "Funeral March"..... <i>Chopin</i> |
| 6. "G minor"....." | 12. "Moses in Egypt"..... <i>Rossini</i> |

Piano Forte Solos.

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| 15. "Trovatore," Chorus, <i>Due</i>
Chorus..... <i>Verdi</i> | 19. "Faust," Tenor, Solo, Old Men's Song
and Soldiers' Chorus..... <i>Gounod</i> |
| 16. "Luciferia Borgia," Drinking Song
(Fantasia)..... <i>Donizetti</i> | 20. "Le Prophet"..... <i>Meyerbeer</i> |
| 17. "Lucia de Lammermoor,"
"Cinderella" Non Piu Mes..... <i>Rossini</i> | 21. "Linda"..... <i>Meyerbeer</i> |
| 18. "Sor-nambula," Caprice..... <i>Bellini</i> | 22. "Dinora"..... <i>Meyerbeer</i> |
| 19. "Norma," Varieties..... | 23. "Bords du Rhine"..... |
| | 24. "La Montagnarde"..... |
| | 25. "Shells of the Ocean"..... |
| | 26. "La Fille du Regiment"..... <i>Donizetti</i> |

Fantasias and Caprices

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| 27. Fantasia, "Home, Sweet Home"..... <i>Thalberg</i> | 34. "Whispering Winds"..... |
| 28. "Last Rose of Summer"....." | 35. "Caprice"..... <i>Liszt</i> |
| 29. "July Dale," for left hand....." | 36. Fantasia, "Old Hundredth Psalm"..... |
| 30. "Ever of Thee," &c....." | 37. "Auld Lang Syne," and "Listen to the
Mocking Bird," (Piano Forte Imitations of the Bird)..... <i>Hoffman</i> |
| 31. "Carnival de Venice"....." | |
| 32. Reverie, "Last Hope"..... <i>Gottschalk</i> | |
| 33. La Fontaine..... | |

Marches.

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| 38. March, "Delta Kappa Epsilon"..... <i>Pease</i> | 41. "Amazon March"..... |
| 39. "Grand March de Concert"..... <i>Wallace</i> | 42. "Masonic Grand March"..... |
| 40. "Gen. Ripley's March"..... | |

Imitations.

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| 43. Imitations of the Music Box..... | 48. Imitations of the Church Organ..... |
| 44. "Dutch Woman and Hand
Organ"..... | 49. "Guitar"..... |
| 45. Imitations of the Harp..... | 50. "Banjo"..... |
| 46. "Scotch Bag Pipes"..... | 51. "Douglas' Speech"..... |
| 47. "Scotch Fiddler"..... | 52. "Uncle Charlie"..... |
| | 53. Produces three Melodies at the same time. |

Descriptive Music.

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| 54. "Cascade"..... <i>Blind Tom</i> | 55. The Battle of Manassas..... <i>Blind Tom</i> |
| 55. The Rain Storm..... | |

Songs.

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| 57. "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep"..... | 63. "When the Swallows Homeward Fly," |
| 58. "Mother, dear, I Still Think
of Thee"..... | 64. "Oh! Whisper What Thou Feelest"..... |
| 59. "The Old Sexton"..... | 65. "My Pretty Jane"..... |
| 60. "The Ivy Green"..... | 66. "Castles in the Air"..... |
| 61. "Then You'll Remember Me"..... | 67. "Mary of Argylo"..... |
| 62. "Scenes That are Brightest"..... | 68. "A Home by the Sea"..... |
| | 69. Byron's "Farewell to Tom Moore"..... |

Parlour Selections.

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| 70. Waltz in A flat..... <i>Chopin</i> | 77. Spring Dawn Mazurka..... <i>William Mason</i> |
| 71. Waltz in F flat....." | 78. "Monastery Bells"..... |
| 72. Waltz in C flat....." | 79. "California Polka"..... <i>Herz</i> |
| 73. Tarantelle in A flat..... <i>Stephen Heller</i> | 80. "Albion Waltzes"..... <i>Schuloff</i> |
| 74. "Josephine Mazurka"..... <i>Heller</i> | 81. "L'Esplanade"..... <i>Hoffman</i> |
| 75. "Polonaise"..... <i>Weber</i> | 82. Anen Polka..... |
| 76. Nuit Blanche..... <i>Stephen Heller</i> | |

Programme for the Evening to be Selected from the above.